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ABSTRACT

A study examines qualitatively the extent to which college students indicate that cocurricular theater activities impact on psychodynamic development in J. Katz's five areas--separation anxiety, peer influence, adult role models, personality development, and occupational choice. Subjects, 15 male and 15 female students involved in the theater program of a midwestern university, were interviewed, and transcripts of the interviews were analyzed. Results indicated that theater does have an effect upon students involved in theater at the collegiate level: (1) with "separation from home," theater tended to provide a surrogate family and a support group; (2) in "peer influence," theater participation provided a large group of friends for those involved; (3) in "adult role models," theater participation instilled a stronger sense of direction and a greater sense of maturity; (4) within "personality development," students realized improvements in their self-worth, self-esteem, and confidence level; and (5) within the area of "occupational goals and values," theater trained students in valuable skills which they could use in their chosen careers. Further research might examine any one of Katz' development areas singularly, compare different schools where theater programs are well established, examine family relations, and examine students over a period of time. (Contains 15 references, a table of data, and a figure illustrating Katz' five areas of psychodynamic development.) (RS)

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KATZ'S FIVE ISSUES OF PSYCHODYNAMIC DEVELOPMENT: THE IMPORTANCE OF THEATRE PARTICIPATION TO THE COLLEGIATE EXPERIENCE

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KATZ'S FIVE ISSUES OF PSYCHODYNAMIC DEVELOPMENT: THE IMPORTANCE OF THEATRE PARTICIPATION TO THE COLLEGIATE EXPERIENCE

Scholars have long recognized that the college experience extends far beyond the dynamics of the classroom. These include experiences such as academic studies, class experiences, social activities, and establishing new relational ties with friends, roommates, and professors. There is, however, one aspect of the college experience that researchers have recognized for decades as being a strong force in shaping students lives; that is the aspect of *cocurricular activities*.[1] These activities, such as music, forensics, dramatics, athletics and assorted club affiliations account for much of the experiences available to today's college student.

In the realm of theatre activities, students from across a wide range of majors have participated and been part of the challenge and self-satisfaction of stage performance, regardless of his or her discipline. Rightly so. Theatre, as an interdisciplinary educational activity, is in its third century of existence, officially becoming part of the education of children in 1776 through the efforts of Madame deGenlis, a French noblewoman who founded the first "Theatre of Education."[2]

Since then, it has grown into an important entity of modern educational curricula, both on the high school and university level. As an educational tool, theatre's benefit to the *community*, the *school*, and the *student performer* is well documented in the literature. For the *community*, for example, exposure to theatre raises the level of culture of its members, thereby becoming more critical and aware of both literature and the arts. For the *school*, it provides a source of accomplishment, as well as a source of income. For the *student performer*, theatre supplies a mode

of expression and an exercise in developing poise, self-confidence and enunciation, as well as preparing the student for life experiences. The later of these, the benefits to the individual student, is the primary focus of this study.

Theatre Activities and Personality Development

The notion of theatre activities benefiting those who participate is not new. Indeed, researchers have known for years that activities such as theatre participation can have positive consequences on students' lives, elementary through college levels (Berk and Goebel 468-486). However, the question remains how and to what extent such activities affect the students' personality development, if at all. Some scholars, like Rubin and Kuh, suggest that theatre participation aids a students' development through a process called *bridging*. This occurs when students apply what they've learned in their classes to what they have experienced outside the classroom, they connect and compare aspects of the two. As this occurs, students can draw conclusions and "bridge" knowledge from one set of experiences to the other. *Bridging* can also extend to the student's family and peer life. In this manner, an examination of theatre experiences and how they are bridged to other life experiences, can provide insights into the developmental aspects of college student's personality growth.

One term used to describe the elements of personality growth is *Psychodynamic Development*, it can be defined as the study of the development of personality with past and present experiences. Essentially, this refers to the stages through which a human progresses as he or she approaches psychological maturity. While this development is continuous, it seems to intensify as an individual reaches adolescence or puberty. One model developed by Katz addresses this period of increased personality

growth or *Psychodynamic Development*. It outlines five major areas that are unique to the collegiate stage of development. These five areas include 1) separation from home, 2) peer influence, 3) adult role models, 4) personality development, and, 5) occupational goals and values See Figure 1). While a detailed discussion of each of these issues of psychodynamic development is not possible here, a brief summary is useful in understanding how theatre activities may impinge on each issue (47-75).

Insert Figure 1
about here

Issue 1 - Separation From Home

The notion of *separation* has been extensively addressed by several authors (Hoffman and Weiss 157-163; Lapsley, Rice, and Shadid 286-294). Katz's model suggests that, while parents may have been nurturant during the early years, students nevertheless need to look beyond their past with their parents toward other modes of thinking. New experiences are needed to replace old ones.

Students often anticipate attending college to experience other things than what their parents or home community could offer. After having been exposed to the same group of experiences for years, the typical student welcomes the opportunity to assimilate other viewpoints. However, as Katz maintains, what students fail to realize is that the comforts of home are not continually available. Consequently, students tend to initially experience separation anxiety.

Issue 2 - Peer Influence

Another area of psychodynamic development that is also influential to the college student is *peer influence* (Stark 78). While professors and instructors clearly provide strong influences on personality development, friends and acquaintances that they acquire are more influential. As Katz's model depicts, peer influence is a powerful force and peers directly affect personal psychodynamic development, whether it be through one to one contact or through small social groups (Boyer 34). Exposure to people with different and sometimes opposing values and views may leave a lasting effect on the typical college student. Jersild, Brook and Brook stated that many adolescents, as they leave the family circle, found their peer group essential because it provided them with a basis for self-evaluation and change (52).

Issue 3 - Adult Role Models

In the third area, Katz notes that *adult models* often change drastically from the home environment to the college environment. Parental influence shapes students' lives up to the point of entering college. Lapsley, Rice and Fitzgerald (561-565) stated that the stronger the attachment to parents, the more adjusted students will be later in life. This attachment however, is challenged by other adults in the college environment. After 17 years of living with the same group of adult role models, the student entering college strives to identify him/herself with adults in the college environment, often times attaching themselves to instructors and other adults. Some have radical points of view, while others are willing to talk with them about topics like sex, drugs, alcohol, etc. (Gaff and Gaff 642-656).

Hoffman and Weiss suggest that most students come from families where the students depend upon the parents for emotional fulfillment. This tends to provide the student with a healthy attachment to their parents. As the college years progress, students begin to selectively choose aspects of adults they admire to incorporate into their own personalities and lifestyles and break the ties with their home and parents. In general, college men and women throughout their school career seek out fresh role models to pattern themselves after. Many times these roles are different from those of their childhood (157-164).

Issue 4 - Personality Development

Cocurricular activities may have another potential effect on Katz's psychodynamic model, that is *personality*. According to Katz, students progress through a more absolutist attitude about certain subjects to a more tolerant, complex and flexible attitude. For instance, when freshmen enter a residence hall, a wide variety of norms and standards are in place. Students are more likely to remain steadfast in their attitudes and viewpoints early in their college years. Freshmen are often more definitive about who is part of the in-group as opposed to the out-group. This comes as a result of early orientation toward certain ideas that are deemed to be desirable or undesirable. New students are often quite dogmatic and absolute in their thinking, and are unwilling to accept the viewpoints and beliefs of others. They often find themselves being quite unmoving when it comes to accepting other ideals to maintain beliefs and standards they already have formed (42-75).

However, as new ideas and opposing viewpoints become part of their college experiences, these students tend to form personality characteristics that are less established. This infusion of new beliefs

and values often move college students to question long-standing beliefs. As a result, they will engage in "self-searching" behaviors, which subsequently leads to a greater acceptance of diverse belief and value systems.

Issue 5 - Occupational Goals and Values

The final area of Katz's psychodynamic development model is *occupational* selections. Deciding on an occupation can be problematic with many college students. When a person leaves college, there are so many new opportunities available that it can become overwhelming. Still other students encounter stress about occupation while still in college (Shipton and Steltenpohl 689-705). Upon entrance into college, many students are set into a particular job preference or area of study. They had been debating for years throughout high school and they "know" what they will study in college. This predetermined set of experiences may not be the exact path that they take or the exact occupational choice they pursue following graduation. Katz argues, from a very early age, children are asked what they want to be when they grow up. In high school, students are pressured into college prep courses and made ready for their college experience. By their senior year, they are expected to have made an occupational choice. This is needed to choose which courses they should take at college.

Madison maintains that this pressure to choose often rushes students into premature decisions about life in and after college. A special anxiety arises in which the student becomes uncertain about the decisions made. The choice may have been valid while in high school, but after experiencing college, other talents and strong points emerge. Even in the collegiate environment, the situation is difficult. Many colleges are set

up with the intent and purpose of training a student in a certain vocation and often provide little room for the student to explore (75,77).

In summary, Katz's model depicting the five areas of psychodynamic development, formulates the framework by which to explore personality growth at the collegiate level. In this research project, theatrical involvement will be closely scrutinized in relation to each of the developmental areas discussed. Specifically, this study examines qualitatively the extent to which college students indicate that cocurricular theatre activities impact on psychodynamic development in the Katz's five areas of separation anxiety, peer influence, adult role models, personality development, and occupational choice?

Methodology

Subjects

A selective sample of 30 students (15 male and 15 female) was utilized who were involved in the theatre program from a midwestern university consisting of approximately 9,000 students. In particular, the respondents were those who were involved in theatrical productions at the university between the years 1989 and 1993.

Procedures

The intensive interview technique was utilized as the basis for data collection. The interview technique provided an atmosphere more conducive for students to freely respond about areas under question. The five developmental areas of Katz's psychodynamic development model provided the framework for the questions used in the interviews. The schedule of questions used was developed through a listing of the broad categories in which theatre activities would likely have an effect, besides specific questions about theatre activities. These questions were then divided

into groups and ordered into the interview schedule. To ascertain the efficacy of the questions and potential ambiguities, the schedule was first tested on two theatre students not involved in the study.

Data Analysis

To make the data more amenable to analysis, all 30 interviews were recorded on audio cassette and transcribed. After transcribing was completed, four independent coders reviewed and identified statements from the interviews that suggested an influence of theatre on a student's life. Once completed, each item was placed on cards for use in the process. The coders then independently sorted the cards containing specific statements into one of the Katz's previously mentioned developmental areas. Coders were also instructed to form other categories corresponding to any other areas of psychodynamic development they felt were present within the statements as being affected by theatre. Intercoder reliability for each of the five categories ranged .70 to .75.

Results and Discussion

According to the results, each of the five developmental areas outlined by Katz revealed varying degrees of influence from theatrical activities. Several central themes emerged from the transcript regarding psychodynamic development and theatrical activities. These themes dealt with family matters, friends and friendships, working with others, occupational skills and inner growth. Specific quotations illustrating these themes are found in Table 1.

Insert Table 1
about here

Psychodynamic Developmental Areas - Emergent Themes

Issue 1--Separation From Home - One theme that emerged from the interviews was that of theatre serving as a *surrogate family*. Many of the respondents referred to the theatre community as a surrogate family in which they could place their trust. Those involved in theatre served as guides for their friends and almost became "brothers and sisters" to some. Typical comments in this area consisted of "You do so much with all these (theatre) people that they're like your family" or "The theatre people are like my family away from home." These comments seemed to coincide with Katz's discussion of separation from home and personality development.

The issue of surrogate family has not been extensively documented in past literature. Clearly, students experience anxiety when they leave home and are no longer able to reap the benefits of being at home in a familiar environment. College, as such, is an unfamiliar environment to many students who may have led a fairly secure or sheltered life at home. Adjusting is often a long and difficult process. As Katz stated, students experience separation anxiety as a result of moving away from home. From this anxiety rises the need to fill a void formed in students' lives that was once filled with the constant presence of the family.

Based on the results, those involved in theatre appear to have found a replacement in theatre for the omnipresent family group they had experienced throughout childhood. Theatre students, according to the interviews, socialized together, either backstage as they worked on a given production, after-hours social gathering, or just simply sitting and talking together. Through this socialization, students were able to form strong bonds with those whom they socialized. They felt a strong network of emotional ties began to form for many students, which helped to serve as a replacement for the comfort they once felt at home. This strong network

seems to make it much easier for many students to adjust to being away from home when they had a common activity to engage in, such as theatre.

Another theme that emerged with the family aspect was *strengthened relations* with existing family members. Several respondents stated that relations with their own families were changed and often times strengthened due to their involvement in theatre. Comments included: "Because of (theatre), the relationship with my dad got stronger" and "it (theatre) created a bridge where I could talk to my family a lot more." One particular respondent said that because of a certain production, he and his father grew closer. Their relationship became stronger through the course of the production process. The father and son discovered a common bond they could share that was brought out because of the son's involvement with the production. A sense of pride and accomplishment arose. Many respondents stated that they participated in theatre to "prove" to themselves, and to an extent their families, that they could do it; that they could accomplish something that was a source of enjoyment for so many people.

Another interviewee responded because she was involved in theatre, it provided something in which her whole family could take part; something they could attend and be proud of her accomplishments. She stated that she had a large family and that they enjoyed coming to watch her in the productions. Attending a theatre production provided an excellent opportunity for the whole family to get together. As previously mentioned in the literature, when students enter college, they often look beyond their parents as models for thinking and believing to new modes of thinking. Lapsley, Rice, and Shadid (286-294), as well as Katz, stated that students entering college were anxious to assimilate different points

of view into their lives. This process helped students to gradually transfer attachment from their home life to the college. It is evident from the interviews that such an assertion is valid. Many students indicated that theatre helped provide a means of connection between them and their family. This suggests that the change from home to college was made a bit easier for students, knowing that they had support for what they were doing from their family members back home.

Beyond the issues already discussed, the interview respondents spoke of theatre providing *confidence*. Students gained confidence in themselves and their own abilities. Arguably, this confidence helped make the transition from home to college a little easier. Implied here is that confidence gained through theatre helped students to feel better about themselves and their accomplishments in college which in turn helps alleviate Katz's separation anxiety.

This suggests that theatre students develop higher self-regard and are more willing to accept themselves. It can be argued that, with a moderate degree of confidence, theatre involvement has a positive effect upon self-regard and self-acceptance of its participants. This may also provide the student with the means for realizing identity. Adolescents pass through a stage known as identity versus role confusion. The confidence gained through theatre that assists in self-acceptance may also aid in the formulation of identity and the elimination of some role confusion. Conceivably, a student who accepts him/herself with more self-regard, will have greater confidence within. This confidence may help ease separation anxiety by providing the student with more reasons to feel good about themselves, as well as aiding in the formulation of self-identity.

Issue 2--Peer Influence - Katz's second area of psychodynamic development pertains to peer influence. Several respondents mentioned that theatre participation served as an excellent vehicle for learning about other people. Respondents felt that, through playing other characters and through simply working with other people in the production process, gave them valuable *social skills.* The characters they played in a production helped them to empathize with others. A typical comment concerning this topic included; "Being a character in a show, you learn to see things through other people's eyes and not just your own."

Many respondents felt more adept at not only reading other people, but working with others, though they may not particularly enjoy the other person's company. Comments included: "I learned so much about other people and about relationships. That's not just theatre, that's real life" and, "Being in theatre is like being on a team to me" or, "When you're in a show, you see tempers, you see happiness and you're bound to get closer to each other and form a bond."

The interviews also revealed that theatre students, majors and non-majors found support from a caring group of friends as a result of their involvement in theatre. With theatrical activities, they were able to acquire an almost instant group of friends to help make the transition from home to college a bit easier. Many interview respondents stated that being part of a caring group from the very beginning of their college careers gave them support and a framework of ideas to assimilate into their own lives. It became evident through the interview process that students felt that being part of an cocurricular group, namely theatre, gave them an advantage.

Another emergent theme suggested that theatre tended to be, for many respondents, a valuable resource for *gaining friends*. Nearly all respondents stated that the vast majority of their current friends were those involved in theatre with them. Not only did theatre involvement supply a source of people in which to interact, but the friends in theatre were much closer to each respondent than friends from other areas, such as classes or resident halls. Other respondents remarked; "Most of my closest friends, I met through theatre." Other statements regarding friends included: "In theatre, there's that support group of friends and advisors that's really strong...." "Theatre has taught me how to deal and work with people whom I might not necessarily get along with...." "There's moments that you get from theatre friends that you can't get with other friends...." and "Theatre people are so outgoing and energetic and that is what draws me to them as friends."

According to the results, there were several benefits to be gained through involvement in theatre activity in this psychodynamic area. For one, interview respondents said they gained outgoing, energetic, close friends who possessed positive self-actualizing characteristics that provided the potential to assist students in the socialization process. Jersild, Brook and Brook stated that adolescents found their peer groups essential for self-evaluation and change (24). Groups of friends provided a framework to which students could compare themselves. As indicated in the results of this study, being involved in theatrical activities provided an instant group of acquaintances. This not only helped in dealing with separation anxiety, but also in social development.

Beyond those issues already discussed, the results suggested that theatre provided an excellent opportunity for students to work together on

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a common project and in the process, form strong bonds with each other. Theatre participation provided an excellent framework for this essential social interaction and change. Some respondents also felt that theatre provided an excellent opportunity to learn about other people. They felt that this learning took place on two different levels. In the first level, students in theatre found it necessary to look inside themselves for particular traits to apply to a character, but also found it necessary to observe others to learn what makes other people function. Observation of other people provided students with an education about others that would not be available working in other areas besides theatre. Theatre productions are after all, stories about people interacting with themselves, but more often interacting with others. To accurately portray a character that is not necessarily identical with the student playing the character, that student must have a knowledge of what make his/her particular character unique and different. This requires an acute understanding of how different people function in different situations.

The second level in which students learned about others was that of working one-to-one with other students on the different aspects of a production. Working side by side with others required students to learn about those they worked with in order to be able to work comfortably with them and accomplish the task efficiently. Working alongside others on a theatre production also helped to form strong bonds with coworkers that may not have been possible without a common project such as theatre.

In summary, almost all respondents interviewed agreed that, if it had not been for their theatre activities, they would not have as many friends as they did. Theatre tended to provide an outstanding chance for students to gain friends to identify with. This concept is very similar to the

subject of the surrogate family. After entering college, students experienced separation anxiety and needed someone or something to replace their family. Theatre provided a surrogate family of friends with which students could identify. Theatre students interviewed spent a great deal of time socializing and sharing common interests. For them, theatre was the major provider of friends.

Issue 3--Adult Role Models - Students who enter college look for new experiences not only in their peers, but also in the *adult role models* they choose. Gaff and Gaff stated that instructors who took the time to discuss topics which are of concern to students (e.g., sex, drugs, and alcohol) were more likely to be accepted by students as a role model than instructors who were indifferent or impersonal. These instructors made a larger impact on students and their philosophies. This variety of instructors tends to provide for a strong base for students to transfer attachment from home to school (642-656).

Contrary to this research, however, the interview results revealed very little about the types of adult role models that are chosen by theatre students, if at all. Results instead revealed that, rather than chosing an adult role model, many of the interview respondents felt that theatre participation helped shaped them into strong adult role models themselves.

The results also suggested, to a lesser degree, that theatre participation added a great amount of responsibility to students' lives that also helped those students become more efficient adults. Theatre tended to instill a greater appreciation for the concept of deadlines and having things done on time. In summary, a great amount of adult responsibility went along with being involved in theatre, and students interviewed felt that this helped immensely in their training as strong

adult role models. Rather than speaking of the adult role model as something they wish to pattern themselves after, many viewed the training they received in theatre participation helped them become strong models themselves.

Issue 4--Personality Development - Katz's fourth area of psychodymanic development pertained specifically to *personality*. One theme that emerged from the interview data suggested the notion of *inner growth*. Interview respondents indicated that they learned a great deal about themselves from theatrical activities. First, they reported learning about themselves through working with other people on an intense theatre project. Comments included "Theatre forces you to work with people you might not necessarily want to work with. You do have to cooperate" and "In theatre, you learn a lot about yourself, stress and how to handle pressure, and how to deal with others."

As evidenced by the interview comments, a great deal of personal growth took place in playing different characters onstage. Several respondents stated that for each character they played onstage, they were required look within themselves and find characteristics of themselves to apply to that particular character. Elements from their own personalities and lives went into the creation of each character they portrayed. Typical comments included: "Theatre helps you relate to other people because it teaches you to read people; your audience and other people in order to get your character" and "Every character you play, you find something in yourself that you can put into that character."

Referring again to Jersild, Brook, and Brook, personalities of college freshman tend to be quite absolutistic in nature. By the time an adolescent reaches college age, his/her personality traits tend to be

firmly established. Patterns learned at home from parents, teachers and others dictate how students should conduct themselves in certain social situations. When students enter the residence halls as freshmen, they find that norms and standards are already in place. Yet, these norms and standards may be quite different from those they were exposed to in childhood. As a result, students tend to cling to their learned beliefs and may have a difficult time initially accepting the viewpoints of others.

Several interview comments alluded to this. One such statement was that theatre forced students to become more open in their thinking, as stated by Fitch (24-30). Being exposed to others in a field such as theatre where people tended to be extremely outgoing and energetic, provide students with other viewpoints that they incorporated into their own cognitive processes. This helped open students' minds to other people and be willing to accept differing viewpoints. Existentiality is when an individual is able to use learned values and principals with flexibility when dealing with different situations. This flexibility in dealing with certain situations often involving other viewpoints illustrates the notion that theatre tends to assist students in becoming flexible in dealings with others and more open in their thinking.

One such way in which theatre helped students to become more open in their thinking was that theatre provided a means for students to look into themselves and others through performing onstage. With each character they portrayed, students found it necessary to look inside themselves and draw from their own experiences. These experiences were applied to the character and used to make that character come alive. This required a knowledge of self. This process also required a knowledge of others and how they function. The experiences students gained from working with

personalities onstage carried over to their personal lives and how they conducted themselves in similar situations. The acting process also helped to keep the student's mind open to other viewpoints that aided in the acceptance of others as their college years progressed.

Issue 5--Occupational Goals and Values - Katz's final area of psychodynamic development addressed *occupational goals* and career selection processes. Theatre activities involved much work in many areas both onstage and backstage. Many respondents interviewed felt that they had gained skills and experiences that would prove very valuable in other areas of work that they intended to pursue. Comments included: "Offstage theatre has taught me valuable organizational and supervisory skills" or "Theatre has instilled in me a work ethic and a sense of discipline." Organizational, supervisory and leadership skills were among the valuable skills gained by those taking part in theatre.

Theatre also aided in other occupational-related ways by giving direction to respondents' lives and in clearing up confusions concerning jobs. One respondent stated; "I didn't really know what I was going to do with my textiles degree, and because of theatre I got interested in costume design." Another respondent stated that skills she'd learned in theatre would help in her area: "Theatre has strengthened my abilities as an artist by giving me experience in many media art."

Respondents stated that theatre gave them the chance to actually use what they had learned in theatre classes while they were still in college. Working on an actual live performance provided a training ground. One respondent illustrated this concept: "Theatre allows you to apply what you've learned in class to an actual show."

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Most respondents stated that abilities they acquired through theatre carried through to other occupational areas which they were able to apply to their future career endeavors. For many students who took part in backstage duties and responsibilities, skills like organization and supervision of others proved to be helpful to their own major or discipline. This is consistent with Fitch (21-30) in which he stated that activities enhanced students in career related skills and decision-making. Students also felt that theatre helped to enhance oral communication, which is useful in any occupation where the employee must work with others. Dealing with onstage situations, as well as backstage leadership roles gave the student practice in effectively communicating thoughts and ideas orally.

Theatre schedules were often demanding concerning time, according to interview respondents. In dealing with theatre schedules, students learned how to cope with deadlines and complete tasks on time. They tended to become very goal-oriented, working toward an end product. The efficient structure of available time was essential to complete the tasks that needed to be done, both in theatre and in other areas such as academics and homework. Students indicated they tended to become increasingly responsible for their own actions and responsible for completing projects when deadlines came due. Most students interviewed viewed these traits as desirable from an occupational standpoint. Being involved in theatre helped train students in these useful qualities, according to the interviewees.

Students found that theatre provides them with other valuable experiences in skills they felt were necessary in any field. These skills ranged from organizational and supervisory skills to skills in dealing with

people and using oral communication effectively. Several students stated that skills they gained in oral communication helped them in job interviews. One student felt that because he had grown accustomed to being in front of an audience, he felt far less nervous about talking to others about himself to an employer at a job interview and he could concentrate upon other concerns such as the qualifications and such required for the job. Many students considered this an advantage over other students who did not have on-stage experience.

Summary of the Study

In summary, this study yielded some interesting results reflecting on all five psychodynamic developmental areas outlined by Katz. Results indicated that theatre does have an effect upon students involved in theatre at the collegiate level. Within Separation From Home, theatre tended to provide a surrogate family and a support group of friends for students entering college that tended to make the transition from the home to college smoother. Theatre provided a surrogate family for students entering college, thus providing a means for alleviating separation anxiety. In Peer Influence, theatre participation provided a large group of friends for those involved. These friends were outgoing, energetic, open-minded, and had strong personal ideals. This created a strong base for students in theatre to learn about diverse points of view. In Adult Role Models, theatre participation tended to instill a stronger sense of direction and a greater sense of maturity. This, in turn, helped shape and form students into competent adult role models themselves. Within Personality Development, students realized improvements in their self-worth, self-esteem, and confidence level. Theatre involvement provided a

means for them to feel pride in themselves and a sense of accomplishment. Finally within the area of Occupational Goals and Values, theatre trained students in valuable skills which they could use in their chosen careers, whatever they may be.

Suggestion for Further Study

In conducting this study, several ideas were formulated to extend the research in this area. One direction for study is exploring any one of Katz's developmental areas and examining it singularly. Personality Development seemed to be, from a researcher's view, the area most affected by theatrical activities. Research could be generated by simply applying known personality scales to theatre students and non theatre students and comparing them. Within the area of Separation from Home, similar tests could be taken with freshmen theatre and non-theatre students. Any one particular area outlined by Katz could serve as the basis for a completely different study, and could possibly generate more specific results than if examined as a group.

A second area of further study includes comparing different schools where theatre programs are well established. The theatre program at the university where this particular study was conducted tended to be very "well rounded" in terms of involvement, whereby students were encouraged to explore all areas of theatre while in college (e.g., acting, set construction, makeup, lights, sound, etc.). In other schools in larger, metropolitan areas where theatre is part of the curriculum, departments may tend to specialize and urge students into one area over another. Consequently, students who leave these schools find themselves an "expert" in one area of production. It would prove interesting to compare the results of this study to those conducted at another, larger school of

theatre under similar conditions and observe the results in each of the developmental areas.

Another area of study may center on family relations. Many of the interview respondents stated that theatre either helped to strengthen relations with their families, or provided a new family for them at college. An individualized study of a given respondent and his family relations may be useful in a number of ways. One, it could examine the actual effects of theatre involvement on the existing family structure in greater detail. Two, it could examine the student's home life in detail to attempt to ascertain why a particular student chooses to pursue theatre, or the underlying reasons behind that decision.

Finally, a longitudinal study could prove very useful and yield interesting results. If time permitted, a study could be conducted following a particular theatre student through his/her college career tracking of involvement, feelings toward involvement, family relations, personality changes, peers, adult role models, and choice of occupation and subsequent job orientation. This would provide specific information on a given student and would explore the positive and/or negative effects of theatre participation upon a theatre student.

Many of the findings resulting from this study can be meaningfully applied not only to theatre activities, but to other activities as well. This study focused upon theatrical activities as a primary point of focus. Many of the findings may have applicability for students in other activities (e.g., sports, music, forensics). Activities such as these may provide similar experiences in teamwork and socialization with other students. Students could learn from these experiences and apply them to problems in their own lives.

In regard to specific applications to curriculum, many curriculum coordinators may find the information in this study useful in their planning. Knowing that the actual experience of being involved in a production has strong influences upon student learning, curriculum coordinators could use this information and plan for students to take part in the actual process of production in conjunction with classes students may be taking. Live experiences provided a strong impression upon those interview respondents who took part in both theatrical production classes. Classes provided the raw materials needed for a student to use in preparation for a career in theatre, but actually being involved with a live stage production added a learning experience that would not have been possible through classwork alone.

NOTES

[1]The term *cocurricular* is used synomously with *extra-curricular.* An extensive discussion on this subject can be found in Harvancik and Golsan (ED273 887) or Morgan (ED 291 751).

[2]McKown (1952) provides extensive history of the development of theatre within school curriculum.

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Table 1

Sample of Interviews Comments about Theatre Participation relating to Katz's Areas of Psychodynamics Development

Sample 'Surrogate Family' Comments

"I think I'm closer to the theatre people because we work together all the time and we're like a big family."
"Because of South Dakota Proud the relationship with my dad got stronger."
"The theatre department was my family because when you're involved in a show, it pretty much takes over your life."
"Theatre has helped create a bridge in my family of common interest that we could talk about."
"My parents have always come to the theatre shows to see me or my friends. They support me in theatre."
"The whole theatre staff seems almost like a family to me."

Sample 'Learning About Others' Comments

"I learned so much about other people and about relationships. That's not just theatre, that's real life."
"In theatre, everyone is working together toward a common goal and just doing it and being successful is rewarding."
"Theatre helps you relate to other people because it teaches you to read people; your audience and other people in order to get your character."
"In PRT, you learn a lot about yourself, stress and how to handle pressure, and how to deal with others."
"Being a character in a show, you learn to see things through other people's eyes and not just your own."
"The big thing in theatre is that you learn to work with and react to other people."
"Theatre has taught me how to deal and work with people who I might not necessarily get along with."
"When you're in a show, you see tempers, you see happiness and you're bound to get closer to each other and form a bond."
"Theatre forces you to work with people you might not necessarily want to work for. You do have to cooperate." Theatre taught me a lot about dealing with other people.

Sample 'Gain of Friends' Comments

"A lot of the friends I have now, I've met if not directly then indirectly through theatre."
"My second semester, I got into Capers, and that's when I met a lot of friends."
"I met most of my friends here in theatre."
"Theatre has given me the opportunity to meet people."
"Every friend that I have now, I've met through a show or as a freshman in class."
"Christmas Carol helped a lot because when I auditioned for that show I made friends other than just in the dorm life."
"My closest friends I met during South Dakota Proud. In theatre, you get a lot of social interaction with the others in it."
"The majority of my theatre friends are more liberal and open; their minds are open to different things."
"The people in theatre are great. They're the most open people you'll meet on the face of the Earth."
"Theatre people are so outgoing and energetic and that is what draws me to them as friends."
"Theatre's where I met some of the most wonderful people in my life."
"There's moments that you get from theatre friends that you can't get with other friends."
"My non-theatre friends tend to be very weak character-wise; I find myself entertaining them all the time."

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Sample 'Personality Growth' Comments

"Through theatre, I've gotten a better sense of accomplishment. You actually have done something that has been viewed by a lot of people."

"Every character you play, you find something in yourself that you can put into a character."

"I guess the feeling of self-worth that I get from having an audience clap for me, it's very beneficial for my personality."

"Theatre gives you the satisfaction of convincing the audience that you are what you say you are."

"Theatre has given me a sense of self-esteem and self-confidence."

"Theatre has taught me a lot about myself."

"Theatre gives you the satisfaction of seeing your idea come together. It's like hearing a great gospel song; the shivers up your back."

"My onstage experience has left me with a feeling that I've accomplished something. That keeps me going; keeps me sane."

"It was through theatre that I gained confidence to get where I am now."

"I don't feel so left out with the theatre people.I'm a lot happier, more mature and stable because of the theatre department."

"Theatre gave me the confidence to know that I am somebody and that I have worth."

"Through theatre, I've gotten a lot more confidence in myself; who I am."

"Theatre has helped me not to be so introverted."

"Being onstage is the single biggest rush that anyone can experience and the single biggest boost to one's self-esteem."

"When I was offered a theatre scholarship, I got a good feeling of being wanted by a school."

"Theatre can give a person a great sense of self-respect if they choose to take it."

Sample 'Valuable Skills Gained'Comments

"Theatre gives me a sens of pressure to get things done. Otherwise, nothing would get done in my life."

"Offstage theatre has taught me valuable organizational and supervisional skills."

"Theatre has strengthened me abilities as an artist by giving me experience in many art media."

"I've been able to use my theatre experience in my job situation by writing skits for different functions."

"Theatre has so many deadlines, it's taught me to be more punctual."

"Offstage experience has left me with a greater sense of responsibility."

"Working on a show is a big asset to future life because it forces you to take things on that you've never done before in your life and accomplishing them."

"Working in theatre helps tremendously in the area of oral communication or talking with other people which is valuable for anyone."

"Theatre has instilled in me a work ethic and discipline."

"Theatre has taught me to be very organized and has helped me to structure my time."

"Theatre allows you to apply what you've learned in class to an actual show."

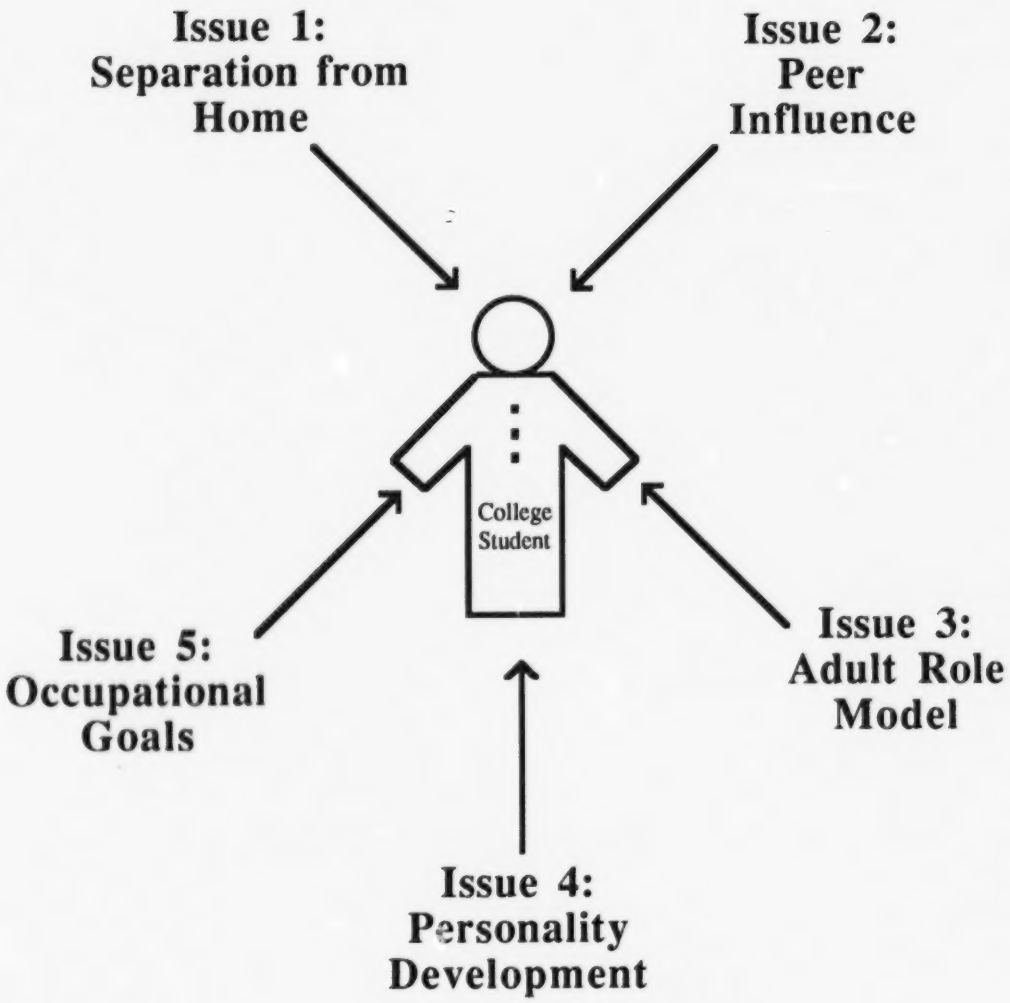

Figure 1

Katz's Five Areas of Pyschodyamic Development as it relates to the College student experience.